

2021 FOOTBALL GUIDE ISSUE

Aggieland

ILLUSTRATED

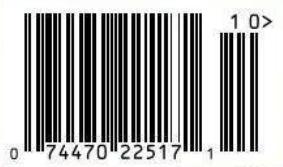
ALSO INSIDE

TU & OU JOIN SEC
COACH SCHLOSSNAGLE
FALL CAMP
AND MORE...



LEON
O'NEAL JR.
TIME TO WAKE'EM UP!

100>



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER • \$3.95



Texas A&M Hotel and
Conference Center
DOUG PITCOCK '49

Experience
ONE-OF-A-KIND
HOWDY
HOSPITALITY
JUST STEPS FROM KYLE FIELD



BOOK YOUR STAY TODAY
TexasAMHotelICC.com



Excited to Serve You this 2021 Season!

First Financial Bank believes relationships are crucial. It's a game of inches - everyday an opportunity to serve you. Through our checking accounts, Mobile Banking services, Home Loans, Construction Loans, Business Loans and many types of Consumer Loans, we work to PUT YOU FIRST. We are proud to serve Bryan/College Station as well as communities across Texas.

FIRST FINANCIAL BANK

YOU FIRST | FFIN.com



MEMBER FDIC



Newsweek

PROPERTY OF
LendingTree

contents



FEATURES

16

AGGIE FOOTBALL PREVIEW

What can we expect from every position group this fall.

BY ROB HAVENS '88

18

FOOTBALL OPPONENTS PREVIEW

We break down all 12 teams the Aggies play this season.

BY ROB HAVENS '88

24

LONGHORN LOSSES MOTIVATE DECISION TO FIND GREENER PASTURES

tu and OU join the SEC.

BY ROB HAVENS '88

26

AGGIES GET DREAM HIRE FOR BASEBALL PROGRAM

Jim Schlossnagle becomes head coach.

BY ROB HAVENS '88

29

TEXAS A&M SPORT CLUBS

Resilient Students Keep Sport Clubs Alive.

BY ROB HAVENS '88

IN EVERY ISSUE

04 Publisher's Note

06 Snapshots

12 Scoreboard

On the Cover: Safety Leon O'Neal Jr. is ready to wake up folks that are sleeping on Texas A&M. The Aggies are fighting for a championship! Photo by Rob Havens '88

JACK WINSLOW BODY SHOP

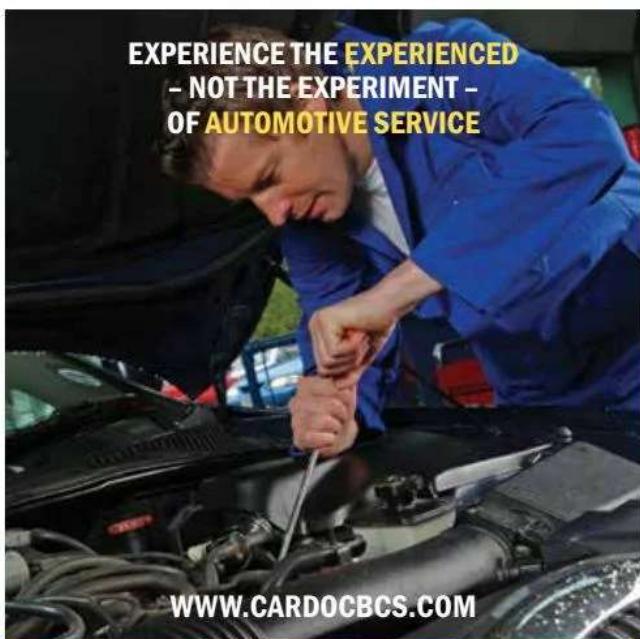
SERVING AGGIELAND FOR OVER 62 YEARS

~ FREE ESTIMATES ~
~ INSURANCE CLAIMS WELCOME ~
~ OPEN 8 – 5:30, M-F ~



1845 GRAHAM RD • COLLEGE STATION • 979.690.1487
WWW.JACKWINSLOWBODYSHOP.COM

EXPERIENCE THE EXPERIENCED
– NOT THE EXPERIMENT –
OF AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE



WWW.CARDOCBCS.COM

Open M-F 8-6 Sat 8-4 • Ask about our 2 year/24,000 mile labor warranty

CarDoc

979-693-8575

204-A Harvey Rd. • College Station

FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED



Howdy Ags!

What a crazy year it has been! Last year at this time, we were all still wondering if we would have college football, and now the new season is about to begin. In visiting with coaches and players, I keep hearing the word "grateful" come up. Players, coaches, staff and my fellow media members navigated through a pandemic that changed the sports world as we know it. People had to be tested and quarantined and follow strict protocols in order to have sports. For the first time since I started shooting pictures of Aggie Football, I wasn't allowed on the field because of conference protocols. I watched the games for the first time in the press box and discovered it's a lot different than being on the sideline. Just a few years ago, I stood between the LSU band in the stands and our team on the field and shot pictures of our seven overtime victory in one of the loudest places in the stadium. Last year I was in a very sterile environment where you can't hear the fans, the band or even the PA announcer, as media type away on their laptops creating the stories you'll read about after the game. There's no clapping or yelling or music, there's no Fightin' Texas Aggie Band or even the Tiger Band. Don't get me wrong, I was plenty happy to be up there, because it meant we were playing football. And as some people complain about wearing masks, I would have worn a hazmat suit to watch our Aggies play. But like the players and coaches and staff I've talked to have said over and over, the pandemic made me grateful. When I got to go out onto Coolidge Practice Fields on a blazing hot day in August to shoot Aggie Football in fall camp, I was grateful. When I get to be on the sidelines this fall, I will be grateful. Covering Aggie sports is the best, and not being able to do the things we normally do has definitely made me grateful. I know that there are still a lot of uncertainties as we move forward but I definitely won't take for granted the opportunities we have to watch and cover Aggie sports.

Gig'em Ags!

Rob '88



FOR REAL-TIME UPDATES ON ALL THINGS AGGIE SPORTS, BE SURE TO FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM AND TWITTER.

@AGGIELANDILLUSTRATED

@AGGIEMAG

Aggieland ILLUSTRATED

PUBLISHER/EDITOR
Rob Havens '88
rob@aggiemag.com
979.229.8046

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Sarah Pyatt '14

COPY EDITORS
Chelsea O'Neal Sweat '17
Daniel Sweat

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Sarah Pyatt '14

Aggieland Illustrated is an independently owned, Aggie owned and operated publication and in no way reflects the views or opinions of Texas A&M University.

Aggieland Illustrated (ISSN 1932-9105) is published six times a year in the United States by Aggieland Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Reproduction or use of editorial or graphics content in any manner without permission is prohibited. Photographs and manuscripts for publication are welcome but will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Address all subscription inquiries and change of address requests to Aggieland Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Allow up to eight weeks for response.

©2006-2013 AGGIELAND ILLUSTRATED
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Volume 16, Number 1

979-229-8046
www.aggiemag.com

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

**1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION FOR \$18
OR 2 YEARS FOR \$32**

FOUR EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE:

BY PHONE: Call us at **979-229-8046**

BY MAIL: Send your name, address and payment (check or credit card) to: Aggieland Illustrated Magazine, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841

ONLINE: Visit www.aggiemag.com

QR CODE: Scan this QR Code for quick and easy access to our subscription page



See your savings add up.



Jerry Anderson
979-764-0015
2214 Texas Ave., South
College Station
jerryanderson@allstate.com



You're in good hands.

Auto Home Life Retirement

Insurance and coverages subject to terms, qualifications and availability. Allstate Property and Casualty Insurance Co., Allstate Fire and Casualty Insurance Co., Allstate Insurance Co., Allstate Texas Lloyd's, Allstate Indemnity Co., Allstate Vehicle and Property Insurance Co. Northbrook, Illinois © 2010 Allstate Insurance Co.

138059

CALL BINFORD FOR ALL YOUR PEST CONTROL NEEDS!



AGGIE OWNED AND OPERATED
FIGHTIN' TEXAS AGGIE CLASS OF '70, '95 & 2020

BUGGIN' BUGS SINCE 1947
binfordinsectcontrol.com
979-822-5524



MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN G.I. *Watch history come alive!*



**History In Motion - Nov 13 & 14, 2021
Christmas Truce - Dec 11 & 12, 2021**

WWI & FT Tank ★ WWII Tanks ★ Vietnam Era Vehicles

PRESERVE ★ HONOR ★ EDUCATE

19124 Hwy 6 S College Station, TX
(979) 690-0501 | www.americangimuseum.org



Programs made possible in part through Hotel Tax Revenue funded from the City of College Station through the Arts Council

snapshot





...great goal eh

Freshman defender Mia Pante scores a goal and celebrates with her teammates in the Aggies exhibition match against Baylor. She comes to Aggieland from North Vancouver, British Columbia. Pante also added an assist later in the match, as she fed a pass to her Canadian teammate Andersen Williams, who kicked it into the net for a 2-0 victory over the Bears. Photos by Rob Havens '88

snapshot





...spiller time

Junior running back Isaiah Spiller shows off his speed during the second day of fall camp. An All-SEC First Team player last year who has rushed for almost 2,000 yards in his first two seasons at A&M,

Spiller is a workhorse and able to carry this team on his back if necessary. The Aggies were the No. 2 rushing offense in the SEC last season thanks in large part to Isaiah, who had six 100-yard games during the season. Photo by Rob Havens '88



ready set hut...

Coach Fisher has established a reputation for developing NFL caliber quarterbacks, and he is attracting some of the best talent in the country. Haynes King, Zach Calzada and the rest of the quarterbacks line up to receive snaps on Kyle Field for an open practice where fans got their first glimpse of the guys battling to be QB1. Photo by Rob Havens '88



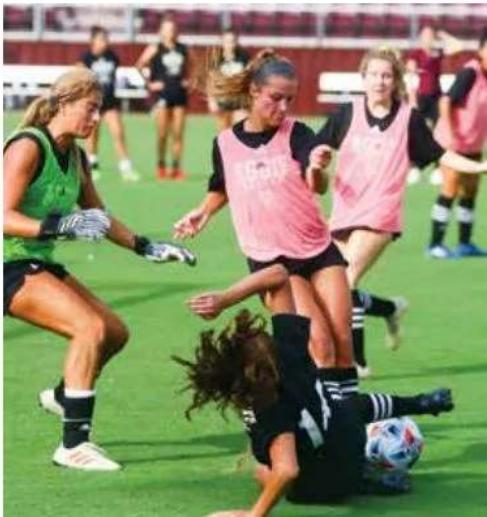


[VOLLEYBALL] After a challenging and disappointing campaign last year, Aggie Volleyball is fired up to get back on the court. Camille Conner returns as a super senior and said, "it was awesome when the coaches asked me to come back for another year. I was so honored and blessed to be at A&M for one more season." Coach Bird said it's amazing to be back on the court. After all of the strict protocols that they had to navigate last year, she can definitely see a change in the energy and excitement that this group brings to the gym. Last year, Bird said this team grew and learned to adapt, adjust as a team, how to communicate, and most of all they learned to be grateful. They are ready to compete!





[SOCCER] The Aggie soccer team enters the 2021 season ranked #9 in the country. They return 10 starters from last year's team that advanced to the Elite 8. Coach G and his staff have added some talented freshmen that could play early and often this season. The girls have added some much needed depth to the team. This team will play different from last year's squad, since the coaching staff tailors the game plan based on what kind of players they have. The new arrivals to the team will have to grow up fast as the Aggies face three of the top eight teams in the country at the beginning of the season, including No. 1 Florida State.



WE MAKE LOANS, NOT EXCUSES.

Commercial
Personal
Home

citybankonline.com

(979) 268-2265

1409 University Dr. East

College Station, 77840



City Bank

Equal Housing Lender Member FDIC NMLS #439822 ©2017 City Bank. All rights reserved. LNM30994
This is not a commitment to lend. Commercial loan applications not available online.



Aggie Owned & Operated

Two Convenient Locations in College Station:

710 Earl Rudder Fwy. S. at University
979-846-7781

12875 Wellborn/FM 2154
979-764-7781

New Location in Bryan:
401 S. Texas Ave at 29th Street
979-823-5222

**DEPENDABLE CARS.
DEPENDABLE DEALER.**
Serving Aggieland for over 30 years.



HONDA
ALLEN HONDA



THE CORNER OF SOUTHWEST PKWY AND HIGHWAY 6
TOLL FREE (866) 680-2424 • WWW.ALLENHONDA.COM

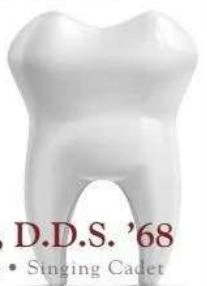


MEETING THE DENTAL NEEDS OF
**STUDENTS &
FORMER STUDENTS**

~ A Conservative Dental Practice ~

(979) **846-2098**

**JDM
DDS** **J. Donald McLeroy, D.D.S. '68**
Yell Leader • Ross Volunteer • Singing Cadet



4343 Carter Creek Parkway, Suite 105 in Bryan

scoreboard



TEXAS A&M

2021 ®
FOOTBALL PREVIEW

BY: ROB HAVENS '88



When Texas A&M named Jimbo Fisher as the new head coach, we all had very high expectations. In just three short years our coach has delivered, and those expectations are turning into realities. The Aggies battled through an all-SEC regular season schedule last year and finished the year in the top 5. And according to Jimbo, "We aint done yet!"

Coach Fisher and his staff have recruited at a level necessary to win a national championship. But even better than that, he and his staff have developed those guys into SEC caliber football players.

As we get ready for 2021, we are reminded what Jimbo did at his last school. In his third year at Florida State, he had a quarterback that wound up being a high NFL Draft pick that led his Seminoles to a great season and an Orange Bowl victory. In his fourth season, a red shirt freshman quarterback led the team to a national championship. Last season, we had a quarterback that led us to an Orange Bowl victory and was drafted high in the draft, and we have a redshirt freshman qb ready to take the reins. So let's hope history repeats itself!

The best part is Jimbo has two extremely talented quarterbacks to choose from. Haynes King is the redshirt quarterback who has been touted for being one of the best athletes and fastest runners on the team. And Zach Calzada has one more year of experience in Jimbo's system and a canon for an arm. According to Jimbo, both guys will play in the NFL one day, but who will start on September 4th?

Both guys had a great showing at our spring game, and when Jimbo opened up the Aggies third practice of the season on Kyle Field, we saw for ourselves that both guys can play. Both guys can throw the ball deep, and the fans got to see wide receivers making great catches down the field. As iron sharpens iron, fall camp should produce a great quarterback to earn the starting nod in game one.

The Aggies also have a plethora of talent in the backfield. Isaiah Spiller has basically rushed for 2,000 yards in two seasons at A&M against the best defenses in the country. He's got it all: speed, agility, toughness and a desire to be the best. He carried the Aggies in several games last year and even showed

2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 4	VS. KENT STATE
SEP. 11	@ COLORADO
SEP. 18	VS. NEW MEXICO
SEP. 25	VS. ARKANSAS
OCT. 2	VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE
OCT. 9	VS. ALABAMA

OCT. 16	@ MISSOURI
OCT. 23	VS. SOUTH CAROLINA
NOV. 6	VS. AUBURN
NOV. 13	@ OLE MISS
NOV. 20	VS. PRAIRIE VIEW A&M
NOV. 27	@ LSU

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	9 - 1
CONFERENCE	8 - 1
HOME	4 - 0
AWAY	4 - 1
NEUTRAL	1 - 0

his won't-quit determination by playing with an injury and gutting it out in the Orange Bowl victory.

Devon Achane had his coming out party in Miami when he rushed for 140 yards and two touchdowns and collected the MVP award of the Orange Bowl last year. During the off-season, he worked on becoming even faster as he sharpened his skills running for the Aggie Track & Field team. If Spiller is thunder, then Achane is lightning. The talented sophomore has Play Station speed and quickness. Opposing defenses will have their hands full when he carries the ball.

Also splitting time in the backfield and at wide out is one of the most talented players on our team, Ainius Smith. He is the spark plug of Jimbo's offense and can make a difference in the game every time he touches the ball. The key to the success of Coach Fisher's offense is creating mismatches. Smith's versatility – being able to move him to the backfield for a rush or a pass or to move him into the slot or to split him out – allows the whole offense to open up.

The Aggies are also loaded at the Tight End position. Jalen Wydermyer is an NFL caliber player that made big plays all last year. Baylor Cupp is finally healthy and has the size and speed to strike fear into every defensive backfield we will face this year. Max Wright is a punishing runner after the catch and gives amazing effort in practice, working to earn playing time on Saturdays. Eli Stowers saw the writing on the wall in the spring with the two-horse race for the starting quarterback job and decided to showcase his athletic ability at the tight end position in fall camp. So far, all reviews have been positive.

Chase Lane, Caleb Chapman, Jalen Preston, Moose Muhammad III and newcomer Yulkeith Brown lead a wide receiver room stocked with talent. And don't forget about Devin Price who may be the best player that no one ever talks about. The kid makes play after play in practice.

The biggest question on the team is the offensive line. The one person we don't wonder about is All-American Tackle Kenyon Green. He will be an anchor for this squad that is full of young talent. Replacing four starters on a line that dominated the line of scrimmage will be difficult, but Jimbo is positive he has the talent to do it. Luke Matthews has waited for his chance to show what he can do, and with the genes he has

and at 6'4 310 pounds this guy was born to play in the SEC. Aki Ogunbiyi and Layden Robinson seem primed to line up at the guard positions. Tennessee transfer Jahmir Johnson comes in with lots of SEC experience and is ready to lock down the other tackle spot. Blake Trainor and a host of other young but extremely talented guys will be pushing hard for playing time as well!

On defense, the Aggies return nine starters from a top ten defensive squad that is ready and able to be even better this year. It all starts with big #8 DeMarvin Leal. This kid is gonna make big bucks at the next level. He is big and strong with amazing athletic ability. And he comes into this season with a big chip on his shoulder after not being recognized by experts for what he accomplished last year. Jayden Peevy was a big-time returning player for Mike Elko, who in just three years, has assembled one of the best defenses in the country. Michael Clemons is a physical specimen, and Aggie fans are anxious for him to have a breakout year. The defensive line is loaded with talent and depth and once again will be one of the best position groups on the team.

Aaron Hansford was another surprise return for the Aggies. He will lead a linebacking crew that lost one of its best players and team leader last year in Buddy Johnson. Andre White, Edgerrin Cooper and Tarian Lee Jr are young guys with lots to prove.

Demani Richardson has become a pivotal player for Elko at safety. Myles Jones and Jaylon Jones man the corners and return with a ton of experience. Leon O'Neal and Keldrick Carper are veteran guys at safety and both are leaders on the team and ready to have big seasons for the Ags. Expect Antonio Johnson and Erick Young to lock down the Nickel position.

Special teams looks to be solid again this year as the Aggies welcome back Seth Small for his senior season. The kid is so consistent that you feel confident every time you send him out there. If you need a long field goal, the Aggies can rely on Sophomore Caden Davis who has a huge leg. Connor Choate is as consistent as they come at Deep Snapper, and Nik Constantinou comes back for his sophomore campaign after being a semifinalist for the Ray Guy Award last season.

The 12th Man will enjoy hearing about jersey changes once again as the

PA announcer lets everyone know that Ainius Smith is on the field for a punt or kickoff return. Let's just hope he gets plenty of chances to make a return this fall.

The Aggies were happy that they won 9 games last year along with an Orange Bowl Victory, but they were not satisfied. Chewing on oranges from the championship trophy was fun, and finishing #5 was great, but these guys have the College Football Playoff on their minds and won't be satisfied until they get their shot. If the new offensive line can gel and our new starting quarterback can lead this team like we think they can, this could be a special year for the Aggies. We have the talent and the belief, we just gotta hit the field and get it done.



01 KENT STATE



Texas A&M starts off the 2021 campaign against the Golden Flashes of Kent State. In a season shortened by COVID-19, the Flashes went 3-1 last year and are anxious to play a full slate of games this season. Under the leadership of head coach Sean Lewis, Kent State averaged 607 yards per game and were the number one scoring offense in the country with 50 points a game. Under center, Dustin Crum completed 74% of his passes last year, and he adds another weapon in Syracuse transfer Nykeim Johnson to this year's team. The Flashes gained 283 yards a game on the ground last season, good enough for third in the nation in that statistic. Their three best rushers return for the 2021 season. Eight of their top nine defenders return for a defense that gave up 38 points a game. The Flashes hope to win shootout contests in the MAC, but facing the #6 Aggies at Kyle Field will be a daunting task. Let's hope the Aggies hit the ground running and dash any hopes the Flashes might have of an upset on opening day.



2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 4	@ TEXAS A&M	OCT. 16	@ W MICHIGAN
SEP. 11	VS. VMI	OCT. 23	@ OHIO
SEP. 18	@ IOWA	NOV. 3	VS. N ILLINOIS
SEP. 25	@ MARYLAND	NOV. 10	@ C MICHIGAN
OCT. 2	VS. BOWLING GREEN	NOV. 20	@ AKRON
OCT. 9	VS. BUFFALO	NOV. 27	VS. MIAMI U (OH)

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	3 - 1
CONFERENCE	3 - 1
HOME	2 - 0
AWAY	1 - 1
NEUTRAL	0 - 0

KENT STATE ATHLETICS

02 COLORADO



The Pac-12 got a late start last year following the lead of the Big-10 and salvaged what was left of the season. The Buffaloes went 4-2 overall and 4-1 in the conference. Karl Dorrell enters his second year in Boulder and hopes to improve a passing game that finished 87th in the country last year. The Buffs relied on Jerek Broussard who gained 895 yards and five touchdowns in just six games. Dorrell will be looking for a new quarterback this fall after Sam Noyer transferred to Oregon State. Brendon Lewis and Tennessee transfer JT Shroud will compete in fall camp for the starting job. Colorado returns nine starters on a defense that led the Pac-12 in tackles for loss. Linebacker Carson Wells led the team with 6.5 sacks and was second in tackles with 37, and he has to have another great season if the Buffs hope to compete for a conference championship. The Aggies have a lot more talent and depth but will have to remain focused against a quality opponent who would like nothing better than to beat an SEC team.

2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 3	VS. N COLORADO	OCT. 23	@ CALIFORNIA
SEP. 11	VS. TEXAS A&M	OCT. 30	@ OREGON
SEP. 18	VS. MINNESOTA	NOV. 6	VS. OREGON STATE
SEP. 25	@ ARIZONA STATE	NOV. 13	@ UCLA
OCT. 2	VS. USC	NOV. 20	VS. WASHINGTON
OCT. 16	VS. ARIZONA	NOV. 26	@ UTAH

2019 RECORD

OVERALL	4 - 2
CONFERENCE	3 - 1
HOME	2 - 1
AWAY	2 - 0
NEUTRAL	0 - 1

COLORADO ATHLETICS



03 NEW MEXICO



The Aggies face off against Mountain West opponent New Mexico in week three. They are coming off a 2-5 season under second-year head coach Danny Gonzales. In the off season, the Lobos added a veteran SEC quarterback in Terry Wilson from Kentucky. He will battle a trio of guys who all played last year for the starting job: Tevaka Tuioti, Trae Hall and Isaiah Chavez. Emmanuel Logan-Greene led the team in catches, and Andrew Erickson can stretch the field if given the opportunity. The Lobos will count on Bobby Cole in the running game. He was the leading rusher last year, averaging 5.6 yards a carry with six touchdowns. The defense struggled last year on the ground and through the air, but Gonzales hopes another year of experience will help on that side of the ball. Joey Noble led the team in sacks last year with four. Jerrick Reed anchors the secondary and had a team high four picks last season. The Lobos will definitely be overmatched coming into Kyle Field, and they have to hope they can stay healthy while collecting a nice check for their visit.



2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 2	VS. HOUSTON BAPTIST
SEP. 11	VS. NEW MEXICO ST
SEP. 18	@ TEXAS A&M
SEP. 25	@ UTEP
OCT. 2	VS. AIR FORCE
OCT. 9	@ SAN DIEGO ST

OCT. 16	VS. COLORADO STATE
OCT. 23	@ WYOMING
NOV. 6	VS. UNLV
NOV. 13	@ FRESNO STATE
NOV. 20	@ BOISE STATE
NOV. 26	VS. UTAH STATE

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	2 - 5
CONFERENCE	2 - 5
HOME	0 - 0
AWAY	0 - 4
NEUTRAL	2 - 1

NEW MEXICO ATHLETICS

04 ARKANSAS



The Southwest Classic returns to Jerry World after a one-year stop in College Station in 2020. Last year, the Aggies took care of the surprisingly better Hogs team that rolled into Kyle Field with a 2-2 record. This game is always a nail biter, but the Aggies have been on the winning side for 9 straight years. Sam Pittman righted the ship a bit with a veteran transfer stud quarterback from Florida, Feleipe Franks, who made the team better the moment he stepped on campus. This year it will be up to KJ Jefferson, who at 6'3 240 pounds has the stature and the arm strength to be a great quarterback for Arkansas. Offensive Coordinator Kendal Briles hopes that a second year under his system will point this team in the right direction. The Hogs finished 3-7 last year against an all-SEC schedule and folks in the state feel confident that Pittman can turn this deal around. Jefferson will look to Treylon Burks at wide-out as his primary target. Burks is 6'3 and 225 and a matchup nightmare for most cornerbacks he will face this year. The defense returns 10 starters from one of the youngest teams in the conference last year, and Defensive Coordinator Barry Odom hopes a second year of experience will make a difference in a unit that wasn't too shabby last season.



2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 4	VS. RICE
SEP. 11	VS. TEXAS
SEP. 18	VS. GA SOUTHERN
SEP. 25	VS. TEXAS A&M
OCT. 2	@ GEORGIA
OCT. 9	@ OLE MISS

OCT. 16	VS. AUBURN
OCT. 23	VS. UAPB
NOV. 6	VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE
NOV. 13	@ LSU
NOV. 20	@ ALABAMA
NOV. 27	VS. MISSOURI

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	3 - 7
CONFERENCE	3 - 7
HOME	2 - 3
AWAY	1 - 4
NEUTRAL	0 - 0

ARKANSAS ATHLETICS

05

MISS. STATE



Mike Leach addressed reporters at SEC Media Days this summer and boasted about how great it was to play at Kyle Field, saying it was one of the Carnegie Halls of stadiums. He added that it helped he won most of the times he came here. Leach's team came out like gang busters last year and upset the defending national champions, the LSU Tigers. But we found out they weren't as good as they looked in that game, and LSU definitely wasn't as good as they were the year before. Against the Aggies, Elko drew up a defense that held the Bulldogs to minus two rushing and only 217 total yards in the game after they rolled up 623 passing yards over LSU in the first game of the season. Leach has had to revamp the entire offense to shape it into what he likes to do. He picked up a transfer quarterback from Southern Miss, Jack Abraham and he returns Will Rogers who threw for 2,000 yards last year. They also return three of the top four receivers from last year's squad and have added more talent via the transfer portal. Leach returns 7 starters on defense that played well enough to keep them in games last year, but as we all know the pirate is all about offense, so we will see how that pans out. State earned a bowl invite with a 3-7 record last year.



2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 4	VS. LOUISIANA TECH	OCT. 23	@ VANDERBILT
SEP. 11	VS. NC STATE	OCT. 30	VS. KENTUCKY
SEP. 18	@ MEMPHIS	NOV. 6	@ ARKANSAS
SEP. 25	VS. LSU	NOV. 13	@ AUBURN
OCT. 2	@ TEXAS A&M	NOV. 20	VS. TENNESSEE STATE
OCT. 16	VS. ALABAMA	NOV. 25	VS. OLE MISS

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	4 - 7
CONFERENCE	3 - 7
HOME	2 - 3
AWAY	1 - 4
NEUTRAL	1 - 0

MISSISSIPPI STATE ATHLETICS

06

ALABAMA



Jimbo lit up social medial this summer when asked if it would take a Saban retirement to get a win over the Tide. He responded with a "We are gonna beat his ass while he's there." Although some were aghast he would make the proclamation, it makes perfect sense to me that you would want to have your coach believe in the team that way. The Tide lost a ton of talent to the NFL draft and will be starting a new quarterback. Bryce Young takes over under center, and according to Saban his bank account has ballooned to seven figures since NIL (Name, Image Likeness) kicked in. John Metchie returns at wide receiver, and Aggie fans know all to well how good he is. Brian Robinson takes over in the backfield for Najee Harris, and at 6'1 228 pounds, he is just like a long line of bruising running backs that Nick Saban has recruited in the past. Texans former head coach Bill Obrien takes over for Sark as offensive coordinator, who is now the head coach at tu. The defense that gave up only 19 points a game lost some key players, but they just reloaded with the four and five star guys that have been on the sideline waiting for their turn. It will be a monumental task to beat them, but if you want to win a natty you have to beat the best teams.



2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 4	VS. MIAMI	OCT. 16	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE
SEP. 11	VS. MERCER	OCT. 23	VS. TENNESSEE
SEP. 18	@ FLORIDA	NOV. 6	VS. LSU
SEP. 25	VS. SOUTHERN MISS	NOV. 13	VS. NEW MEXICO ST
OCT. 2	VS. OLS MISS	NOV. 20	VS. ARKANSAS
OCT. 9	@ TEXAS A&M	NOV. 27	@ AUBURN

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	13 - 0
CONFERENCE	10 - 0
HOME	5 - 0
AWAY	5 - 0
NEUTRAL	3 - 0

ALABAMA ATHLETICS PHOTOGRAPHY

07

MISSOURI



Elijah Drinkwitz said at SEC Media Days that outside of Columbia Missouri he doesn't get recognized a lot. In his second year with the program, the Tigers went 5-5 against an all-SEC schedule. The school just hired a female athletic director, Desiree Reed-Francois, and as their press release says they "are energized to go into the next era of Mizzou athletics" with her at the helm. Quarterback Conor Bazelak returns under center of an offense that averaged 402 yards a game while scoring 27 points per contest. He lost two of his main targets to the transfer portal but retained his biggest target Keke Chism. The 6'4 senior led the team in catches with 35. Steve Wilks joined the team as the new defensive coordinator. Last years squad allowed 408 yards a game and 32 points. The defensive line has Kobie Whiteside and Akial Byers with edge rusher and All-SEC Trajan Jeffcoat on the outside. Blaze Alldredge joins the Tigers at linebacker after transferring from Rice University. Drinkwitz looks for Jalani Williams and Martez Manuel to make plays in the secondary. The Tigers were a fixture on the Aggies schedule for several years, we look forward to a return trip to Columbia.

**2021 SCHEDULE**

SEP. 4	VS. C MICHIGAN	OCT. 16	VS. TEXAS A&M
SEP. 11	@ KENTUCKY	OCT. 30	@ VANDERBILT
SEP. 18	VS. SE MISSOURI ST	NOV. 6	@ GEORGIA
SEP. 25	@ BOSTON COLLEGE	NOV. 13	VS. SOUTH CAROLINA
OCT. 2	VS. TENNESSEE	NOV. 20	VS. FLORIDA
OCT. 9	VS. NORTH TEXAS	NOV. 26	@ ARKANSAS

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	5 - 5
CONFERENCE	5 - 5
HOME	4 - 2
AWAY	1 - 3
NEUTRAL	0 - 0

MIZZOU ATHLETICS

08

SOUTH CAROLINA



Our long-time yearly matchup against eastern division rival South Carolina will have a new look as the Gamecocks have a new head coach. Shane Beamer takes over for Coach Boom after the Cocks went 2-8 last season. On the bright side, the offensive line returns four starters from a year ago. Running back Kevin Harris was one of the lone bright spots for last year's offense, as he became one of the squad's best performers. Luke Doty or Juco transfer freshman Colten Gauthier will battle to be QB1. One of their main targets will be Tight end Nick Muse who returns for his super senior year. Beamer also added Georgia Tech transfer Ahmaren Brown to the receiving crew. On the defensive side DC Clayton White prepares to go with a 4-2-5 alignment using Sherrod Greene and Mo Kaba to anchor the middle of the defense. On the defensive line, leading sacker Kingsley Enagbare and Zacch Pickens welcome Georgia State transfer Jordan Strachan to the fold. The Gamecocks lost a couple of their defensive backs to the transfer portal and will lean heavily on Jaylan Foster on the back side.

**2021 SCHEDULE**

SEP. 4	VS. E ILLINOIS	OCT. 16	VS. VANDERBILT
SEP. 11	@ EAST CAROLINA	OCT. 23	@ TEXAS A&M
SEP. 18	@ GEORGIA	NOV. 6	VS. FLORIDA
SEP. 25	VS. KENTUCKY	NOV. 13	@ MISSOURI
OCT. 2	VS. TROY	NOV. 20	VS. AUBURN
OCT. 9	@ TENNESSEE	NOV. 27	VS. CLEMSON

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	2 - 8
CONFERENCE	2 - 8
HOME	1 - 4
AWAY	1 - 4
NEUTRAL	0 - 0

SOUTH CAROLINA ATHLETICS

09

AUBURN



Last year's game against Auburn might have been a turning point for the Aggie program. In a tight game, the Aggies turned to their rushing attack and dominated the line of scrimmage to score 17 points in the fourth quarter, winning 31-20. For Gus Malzahn, who had always found ways to pull out a trick play to win the game, it might have been the end. After the season, Auburn hired Bryan Harsin as their new head coach. He starts his first year with all five starters on the offensive line returning. Bo Nix struggled last year but not against us. We seem to bring out the best in SEC West QB's. The Tigers also added LSU transfer TJ Finley in the off-season who will battle to get the starting job! The Tigers struggled on defense in the past, and former Vanderbilt head coach Derek Mason comes town to take over as the new DC. Eight starters return from last year's team. Zakoby McClain and Owen Pappoe combined for 216 tackles at linebacker, giving Mason a nice tandem to anchor his defense. The Tigers also added Dreshun Miller, a cornerback from West Virginia, who will help Roger McCreary who returns for his senior year. He had 45 tackles and three interceptions last year for Malzahn.



2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 4	VS. AKRON	OCT. 16	@ ARKANSAS
SEP. 11	VS. ALABAMA STATE	OCT. 30	VS. OLE MISS
SEP. 18	@ PENN STATE	NOV. 6	@ TEXAS A&M
SEP. 25	VS. GEORGIA STATE	NOV. 13	VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE
OCT. 2	@ LSU	NOV. 20	@ SOUTH CAROLINA
OCT. 9	VS. GEORGIA	NOV. 27	VS. ALABAMA

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	6 - 5
CONFERENCE	6 - 4
HOME	4 - 1
AWAY	2 - 3
NEUTRAL	0 - 1

10

OLE MISS



The Aggies & Rebels were unable to play last year after their game was first postponed due to COVID-19 issues at A&M and then postponed again after Ole Miss paused football due to their own C19 problems. So 2021 will be our first time to play Mississippi under second year head coach Lane Kiffin. He led his team to a 5-5 record last year with a big bowl win over No. 7 Indiana in the Outback Bowl. The Rebels were third in the country in total offense last year, averaging 556 yards and 39 points a contest. Matt Corral has developed under Kiffin's tutelage and could be one of the best quarterbacks in the conference. Jerrion Ealy and Snoop Connor return in the backfield behind four returning starters in the offensive line. Dontario Drummond and Braylon Sanders should have big numbers at receiver in the second year of the Kiffin regime. The Rebel defense struggled for most of the year, giving up 38 points per game and over 500 yards. But they had a great showing in the Outback Bowl and Kiffin hopes that was a sign of things to come. KD Hill and Hal Northern will anchor the Rebel defense up front and they return all of their secondary from last year on the back side. This will surely be a big test for the Aggies as they finish the back stretch of the regular season.

2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 6	VS. LOUISVILLE	OCT. 23	VS. LSU
SEP. 11	VS. AUSTIN PEAY	OCT. 30	@ AUBURN
SEP. 18	VS. TULANE	NOV. 6	VS. LIBERTY
OCT. 2	@ ALABAMA	NOV. 13	VS. TEXAS A&M
OCT. 9	VS. ARKANSAS	NOV. 20	VS. VANDERBILT
OCT. 16	@ TENNESSEE	NOV. 25	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	5 - 5
CONFERENCE	4 - 5
HOME	2 - 3
AWAY	2 - 2
NEUTRAL	1 - 0



AUBURN ATHLETICS

OLE MISS ATHLETICS

11

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M



COVID-19 was especially harsh for the Panthers. In July, the decision was made to move the SWAC season to the spring. But after virus issues on their own campus and also during the spring on their opponents' campuses a six-game schedule shrank to just three games. They went 2-1 in the three games and are hungry to play a full schedule this fall. Trazon Connley returns at quarterback after splitting time last year with TJ Starks. He led the team in both rushing and passing yards. Tony Mullins, Colbey Washington and Kris Simmons will be his main targets at receiver. Kristian Mosley and Ahmad Antoine will carry the ball behind what Coach Eric Dooley hopes to be an improved offensive line. The strongest part of the team is on the defensive side of the ball. Led by first-team All-SWAC linebacker Storey Jackson who was the best tackler in the conference. The defensive line should be the best in the SWAC and is anchored by second-team All-SWAC pick Jason Dumas. The secondary can hold its own with Jaylen Harris on the back side. Instead of spring ball these guys were playing their season. After the long wait to get going, these players will have a quick turnaround to start playing football this fall.



2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 4	@ TEXAS SOUTHERN
SEP. 11	@ INCARNATE WORLD
SEP. 18	VS. HOUSTON BAPTIST
SEP. 25	VS. GRAMBLING STATE
SEP. 30	VS. ARKANSAS PINE BLUFF
OCT. 16	@ B-CU

OCT. 23	@ SOUTHERN U
NOV. 6	VS. ALABAMA STATE
NOV. 13	@ ALCORN STATE
NOV. 20	@ TEXAS A&M
NOV. 27	VS. MS VALLEY

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	2 - 1
CONFERENCE	2 - 1
HOME	1 - 0
AWAY	0 - 1
NEUTRAL	1 - 0

12

LSU



The Aggies won a slugfest last year at home against the Tigers and although it wasn't pretty, it was another big step for this team. LSU went 5-5 last year after losing a lot of talent to the NFL, including a Heisman Trophy Winner. Last year they took a big step back, and now, with an NCAA investigation overshadowing their entire program, they are hoping to get back to their winning ways. On the bayou, they have discovered how much Burrows meant to this team and now they are scurrying to find someone that can put them back into the win column. TJ Finley left the program to become an Auburn Tiger, and Myles Brennan suffered a serious arm injury in camp, which leaves Max Johnson as QB1. He's a tall kid at 6'5 219 pounds, and he threw for 1,100 yards and eight touchdowns in limited playing time last year. Kayshon Boutte led the team at wide receiver with 735 yards and five touchdowns. Max also has a 6'7 target at tight end, in Kole Taylor. The Tigers have big Tyrion Davis-Price in the backfield who rushed for 446 yards last season. The defense fell to 124th in the nation after Dave Aranda left for Baylor and Bo Pelini took over. Daronte Jones came in after Pelini departure and will be expected to revive the Tiger D.



2021 SCHEDULE

SEP. 4	@ UCLA
SEP. 11	VS. MCNEESE
SEP. 18	VS. C MICHIGAN
SEP. 25	@ MISSISSIPPI STATE
OCT. 2	VS. AUBURN
OCT. 9	@ KENTUCKY

OCT. 16	VS. FLORIDA
OCT. 23	@ OLE MISS
NOV. 6	@ ALABAMA
NOV. 13	VS. ARKANSAS
NOV. 20	VS. ULM
NOV. 27	VS. TEXAS A&M

2020 RECORD

OVERALL	5 - 5
CONFERENCE	5 - 5
HOME	2 - 2
AWAY	3 - 3
NEUTRAL	0 - 0



LONGHORN LOSSES MOTIVATE DECISION TO FIND GREENER PASTURES

BY ROB HAVENS '88

When the Aggies made the decision to leave the Big 12 and go to the SEC, the Texas Longhorns expressed their disdain for us and thought it was a big mistake. The leaders of our great university at the time were tired of being in the shadow of the folks in Austin and being in a conference where everybody let Texas do whatever they wanted. The Longhorn Network was the straw that broke the camel's back as the arrogant leadership of the so-called "Flagship University" made a deal that would provide millions of dollars for them and create a roadblock for a Big 12 Conference network. It also was designed to create a recruiting advantage for the Horns in Texas High School sports.

We approached the SEC, and they were more than excited to talk to us about joining the conference. During negotiations, we were assured at the time that if and when the Longhorns decided to follow us, we would have veto power over that decision. The move for us was considered a 100-year decision.

Not only has it been a great move for us financially, but in terms of recruiting and branding, it has been everything we hoped it would be. There were some growing pains in some sports as we adjusted to the higher level of athletes that we faced in the strongest conference in the nation, but the Aggies were up to the challenge. In the years since joining the SEC, we have competed at the highest levels and won several conference championships.

Then on the Aggies' day at SEC Media Days, a story broke by Brent Zwerneker of the Houston Chronicle that Texas and Oklahoma had reached out to the SEC about joining the conference. Coach Jimbo Fisher took the stage right after the story broke, was asked about it, and replied "I bet they would." Over the next few days the story got legs, and we discovered this deal had been worked on for several months.

SEC Commissioner Sankey and the folks at OU and Texas all gave similar non-denials when asked about it. The cat was officially out of the bag, and in the current landscape of social media the news spread like wildfire. In the next few days, Texas & OU would submit a joint one-page letter seeking an invitation, which was obviously

just a formality as the wheels had already been in motion for several months. TV contracts and networks jockeyed for the best deal, the most lucrative conference alignment, all while keeping A&M in the dark.

The Aggies first response was to say we want to be the only SEC school in the state, something that we had been assured of before joining the conference 10 years ago. But as the days passed and it seemed more and more likely it would happen, the message coming out changed to: we are ready for the challenge and we have to adapt to a changing world in college athletics. The Board of Regents voted 8-1 for us to vote yes on extending an invitation to Texas and OU in 2025. The SEC voted the next day and agreed to the same thing.

Big 12 Commissioner Bob Bowlsby sent a cease and desist letter to ESPN on July 28th after they received intel that they were reaching out to other conferences to set up deals that would allow other Big 12 schools to find landing spots, dissolve the conference and protect Texas and OU from paying an \$80 million ticket for leaving the conference. These rules were set up after A&M left to prevent a similar event from happening down the road. The Horns and Sooners were betting on the fact that their announcement, although scheduled for 2025, would set off a domino effect of schools scrambling to other conferences and allow them to go to the SEC without forking out all that money.

It will be interesting to see how everything pans out, but let's take a look at why this is happening. When the Aggies left, there were concerns that the Big 12 was not strong enough to survive. Over the past 10 years they have tried to figure out what schools they could add to strengthen the Big 12 but have had no success. During those ten years, Oklahoma has continued to win and win big. They have been the Big 12 Champions in football seven times in the last ten years, and they have been in the College Football Playoff 4 times.

Texas on the other hand has gone 78-60 since 2010. In the past 10 games versus OU they were 3-7. In the same span, they were 3-7 against TCU. Since 2010 they were 3-7 against Oklahoma State. They were 4-4 vs W. Virginia. 5-5 vs Baylor. 5-5 vs Kansas

St. They have compiled a record of 17-34 versus ranked teams since 2010. They have had four head coaches since 2013. In a much weaker conference, they have struggled to remain relevant.

The powers that be on the 40 Acres are tired of going to their own empty stadium to watch them take on Baylor or Kansas St. They have tried for years to play us so they could actually fill the stadium, but why would we do that? We owned the state! We are (or at least were) the only SEC school in the state of Texas! We have the best coach, we beat them on the recruiting trail, and we play a premier schedule of games in front of the largest crowd in the state! They tried to goad us into playing them by saying we were scared, but we had nothing to gain by playing them. And they knew it.

The Longhorns have been a huge fish in a little pond, and they got to throw their weight around and do whatever they want because they ran the conference. There was just one problem; they couldn't win! They have been arrogant for years, saying "We are Texas!" But the numbers didn't add up, so now they partner up with a school that is actually winning and come to our conference and say "the college landscape is changing, super conferences are around the corner, better take us now before we go somewhere else!"

The SEC has officially made their bed and now they will have to sleep in it, but just wait 'til Texas starts acting like Texas. Nebraska couldn't wait to get away from them. Even now the T-sip trollers are all over social media bragging about how great they are and trying to say we are just scared of them.

In my opinion, our relationship can be summed up with a story. Say you had a neighbor and he was really obnoxious. He painted his house burnt orange, he whistled "I been working on the railroad" all the time. He put political signs in his yard that made your stomach turn and was just a real jerk every time you saw him. So you decide to move to the most beautiful neighborhood in town and have 10 amazing years there. Then one day you see a realtor at the house next door showing him the property... ■

Director of Athletics Ross Bjork hit a grand slam this summer when he hired former TCU baseball coach Jim Schlossnagle to be the next head coach for Aggie Baseball. Bjork said they did a nationwide search, looking for the best fit for Texas A&M, and they found their guy about 180 miles north of College Station.

Clearly one of the best coaches in the nation, Schlossnagle is no stranger to Aggie fans. He was responsible for breaking the hearts of Aggie fans, as it seemed year after year his teams were responsible for knocking the Aggies out of the tournament. In fact, he was in the opposing dugout of the Aggies for our last loss in Omaha in 2017.

Rob Childress is a class act and led this program from 2006 to 2021. He amassed over 600 wins and developed student athletes into young men of character that he hoped would be great husbands and fathers one day. In the



AGGIES GET **DREAM HIRE** FOR BASEBALL PROGRAM



process, he helped several players realize their dream of playing professional baseball.

If you were going to make a change, it's imperative that you go out and get the best, and that's what Bjork believes he has done. In his press release Ross declared "[Schlossnagle] owns the best winning percentage of any college baseball program in Texas over the last 10 years, and his track record of success on a national stage speaks for itself. Texas A&M deserves to have the very best of the best, and we have hit a proverbial 'grand slam' with Coach Schlossnagle. We are excited to welcome Coach Schlossnagle, Jackson, and Kati to Aggieland and Texas A&M."

Schlossnagle has been a head coach for the last 20 years. The last 18 were at TCU, where he built a program from the ground up. Prior to his arrival on campus, the Horned Frogs had only been to two NCAA tournaments. After taking over the program, he led the

team to 15 tournaments in 18 years. The team won seven regional titles and earned five trips to Omaha, including four consecutive trips from 2014-2017.

He did all of this at an expensive private school that has the same number of scholarships as we have, which can create barriers for recruits to attend the school because of their financial situation. He built a brand in Ft. Worth, and when people hear the words "TCU Baseball" they know they are one of the best.

In his 20 years of being a head coach, he has won over 800 games. At his introductory press conference, Coach Schloss recognized what a great program we already have and that there's a great foundation for him to build upon. He emphasized that the program belongs to the players and former players. He believes his job is to put our players in the best position to have success.

He announced to players considering coming to Texas A&M "Get ready, we're coming!" He believes when choosing a destination to attend school, players look at academics, player development and team success. The goal at Texas A&M is not to get to Omaha, and not to win a game in Omaha, the goal is to win a national championship in Omaha.

He admitted winning a championship would not happen overnight, but he said he is a very impatient man and his goal is to make it happen as soon as it can. To that end, he has already assembled a top-notch staff.

Our new associate head coach is Nate Yeskie. He is a renowned pitching coach who was named the 2017 D1Baseball Assistant Coach of the year. The last two seasons he was in charge of the pitching staff at the University of Arizona, who advanced to Omaha this summer. He also spent 11 seasons with the Beavers of Oregon State and won a College World Series title with them in 2018. He earned National Pitching Coach of the Year twice in his 16-year career.

After eight years on the LSU coaching staff, Nolan Cain joins Schlossnagle and is excited to be wearing maroon and white at Olsen Field. Cain has heard the heckling from the Section 203 fans, and he said he is looking forward to being in the home field dugout. Cain is one of the best recruiters in the country. Three of his last four recruiting classes at LSU were ranked in the top 5, including the No. 2 spot in 2020 and the top spot in 2018. He is also an outstanding coach and teacher of the game at a variety of positions.

Also coming to Aggieland from the Pac-12 is hitting coach Michael Earley who joins the staff from Arizona State. He is one of the best young hitting coaches in the country, he spent the last five years in Tempe, AZ. Under his tutelage, Spencer Torkelson became the No. 1 overall draft pick in the 2020 MLB Draft. Spencer was undrafted out of high school. Four of his hitters were selected in last year's shortened, five round draft. In 2019 the Sun Devils led the nation in homeruns. Earley not only coaches collegiate players, but he also actively mentors hitters on all levels.

Schlossnagle also announced they will retain Jason Hutchins, the Director of Operations and, in Schloss' own words, the back bone and heartbeat of the baseball program for 24 years. Will Fox, a former TCU player, will also stay as the Director of Video and Analytics. Jeremy McMillan will continue to be the Sports Performance Coach, and this is Jeremy's 11th season

on staff at Texas A&M.

Coach Schloss also added 32-year coaching veteran Chuck Box as the program's Director of Player and Program Development. Box arrives in Aggieland after a four-year stint as Head Baseball Coach at Hartsfield Academy in Jackson, Mississippi. He is a six-time MAIS Coach of the Year recipient and is currently a Task Force Scout for USA Baseball.

When asked why he made the move to Texas A&M after 18 successful seasons at TCU, Schloss replied, "I like a challenge, not a blind challenge, but one that there are things in place, where there has already been some success and room for growth. Not just on the field but programmatically. I hate the term CEO coach, sometimes I get called that. To me that implies that you're not a baseball guy. You look at the other stuff, but to me, we are not just looking to have a good team, we are looking to have a great program and that is something that is sustainable over time. I just felt like at 50 years old, I still have plenty of energy to do something really cool again."

"What we did at TCU was just awesome. To go from a place that had been to two regionals in over 100 years and then be one of only two schools that in a ten year period played in the College World Series five times, that's amazing. Is there still work to be done at TCU? No question, and if had of stayed that was the challenge to get back to Omaha and win a national championship. But here, I talked to Coach Tanner, the athletic director at South Carolina, he used to be the baseball coach and when I was in college at Clemson. Tanner was the coach at North Carolina State, and he left North Carolina State, and they had a phenomenal baseball program to go to South Carolina. And the SEC was good but it wasn't like it is now. I called him and I said, 'Why did you do that?' And he said, 'you know what? I just wanted to coach in the American League East one time.' And the SEC West is the American League East of college baseball.

"I'm not afraid of that. I know exactly how tough that is going to be, and I'm sure it's tougher than I can even imagine, not having been in the league full time. That was the challenge. I don't really have the desire, you never say never, but I was very close to Augie Garrido, I don't have the desire to coach to that age. But I'd like to do this to a certain spot. I just didn't want to have any regrets in my coaching career. I wanted to make a run at something like this. I've been 26 years at a private school, at Tulane as an assistant and then at TCU as the head coach. And there are advantages to that, but there are also some big challenges and so. There have been other opportunities over 18 years, but this lined up at the perfect time, at the perfect place." ■



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

REC SPORTS

STAY HEALTHY
STAY STRONG
STAY MOTIVATED



Visit recsports.tamu.edu to learn more!



Rec Sports
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS



RecSports
recsports.tamu.edu



RESILIENT AGGIE STUDENTS KEEP TEXAS A&M SPORT CLUBS ALIVE

BY ROB HAVENS '88



In March of 2020, the world of sports came to a screeching halt. The cancellation of an NBA basketball game due to COVID-19 was the first of many professional, collegiate, and youth sports events that were cancelled for months. We sat down with Sport Clubs director, Keith Joseph, to ask how the pandemic affected Texas A&M and the students that participate in the Sport Clubs program.

"When everything got shut down university-wise, everything Rec Sports-wise and Sport Clubs-wise was cut off. Everything was shut down. Every one of our 36 teams shut down," Joseph explained. About 75% of the clubs missed out on opportunities to compete for national championships, and they were not allowed to travel, compete, or even practice together.

During the summer, the clubs wondered if they would be able to compete in the fall, and the answer was unfortunately "no." The sports world began to figure out ways to play safely, and decisions were made regarding professional and collegiate sports protocols for testing, contact tracing, and quarantining. However, the Sport Clubs program was still under major restrictions on what they could and could not do.

"We wrote several proposals throughout the year seeking different levels of approvals for the clubs to participate in different ways in order to do anything," said Joseph. While other sports were practicing and playing, the sport clubs were limited to conditioning and skill development. Protocols were established that required

clubs to practice in ten-person cohorts, and they had to track every single practice and every single group. Temperature checks and symptom checks were required at every practice for every participant. "But they couldn't actually fully play their sport," said Joseph. "They couldn't practice in a normal setting, they couldn't scrimmage; they couldn't do a lot of things."

Joseph said it was extremely frustrating for the clubs. They continued to work hard, but not compete, even as other sports from the professional level to youth sports were getting to play. Across the country, Sport Clubs at other campuses also restricted their programs from participating during the pandemic. "We were extremely strict—and understandably had to be," explained Joseph.

Through the frustration, Joseph continued to fight for the students that were continuing to work hard, and he tried to share their stories as they did their best to follow protocols in the hope that they would be allowed to compete. They continually asked throughout the year if they could scrimmage against each other, but the answer was always no. "Jessica Konetski and I wrote probably ten or twelve different versions of guideline increases seeking approval for the clubs to do more, but it was continually 'not yet, we have to wait,'" said Joseph.

It was probably January or February before some clubs were allowed to scrimmage each other. Ten-person cohorts were allowed to scrimmage against each other with time limits: 15 minutes to begin with; then, a month later, they could scrimmage for 30 minutes. Each new protocol also included increasing of cohort size depending on the sport or activity. It was probably March or April before most were able to complete full practices and full scrimmages. For basically an entire year, the clubs were not able to fully play their sports.

Joseph gives credit to the students for "sticking it through." He says, "They lost members, because people were like, 'if I can't play then I'm not going to be part of this.'" As clubs were able to start doing more, different sports faced different restrictions on what they were able to do as far as competing. Some sports that are inherently more socially distanced, like the Trap and Skeet Club, were allowed to do more because they could follow the safety guidelines easier than, say, Lacrosse or Rugby. In fact, Trap & Skeet was able to compete at and win a national championship.

By late April or early May, more clubs were able to compete in games. However, the opportunities were still limited because A&M wasn't the only program facing restrictions. Schools across the state and the nation were under restrictions as well, which limited the opportunities to play.

Joseph says, "We met monthly with all of the Sport Clubs directors in the state of Texas, as well as with all of the SEC Sport Clubs directors. Because of the things we had written showing that all of our protocols and guidelines were working, our program was further along than any school in the state, by far. In fact, with the exception of one school in the SEC that didn't have any restrictions, we were further along than anybody else. We were getting calls all the time asking, 'send me your protocols, what is being approved' and things like that."

Texas A&M Sport Clubs was at the forefront of the push to not only get its own student-athletes back to competing safely in their sports, but to also help other schools succeed in getting back to competition so our athletes had other teams to play against. Joseph credits the students' willingness to fight through the challenges and continue participating in conditioning and skill development with setting their clubs up for success in the future.

As of the day of our interview with Keith, all Sport Clubs events are scheduled to take place without restrictions, and the students are excited to rejoin their teammates to practice and to compete together. Joseph admits that if things change, they are prepared to go backwards and use the successful restrictions that were previously implemented once again. However, he is hopeful that

they will be able to move forward on day one.

I asked Keith, "Through all of the negative things the clubs have had to deal with, what is the most positive thing you have seen or learned from our students during the pandemic. "Resiliency," he declared, "by the officers and by the members that stayed with their clubs. They were restricted to the nth degree regarding what they could do, but they made the most of it and did all that they could. They continued to show up for practices and still wanted to do more. They wanted to keep their clubs active and viable on this campus, so even though they were told 'no' on many occasions—or we were told 'no' and had to pass it down to them—they still showed up. They still wanted to have a club, even if it was just one game in May or only something for the seniors. These team members still came to practice three or four days a week with really no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. That's a poor analogy, but there was nothing out there for them—or they didn't think there was. For them to continue to come every day, whether it was for practice or whatever the case may be, to me was the biggest thing. They kept their clubs going. They could've easily said, 'you know what, we're done for the year and we're not coming back.' And there is a good chance that if that would have happened, we could have lost a lot of clubs. Instead, we actually added a club this year, and we're now up to 37 clubs. If it wasn't for the resiliency and determination of the officers, and the dedication of the club members to keep coming, despite not having games, scrimmages, or anything, it would have been a different story. We are starting our year soon, before classes start, and we have all 37 coming back, ready to go. Can't wait to get going!" ■

LOOKING FOR THAT
PERFECT GIFT FOR THE
DIE HARD AGGIE WHO HAS
EVERYTHING?

GET THEM A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION TO
Aggieland
ILLUSTRATED

ONLY \$18 FOR A ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION
(25% OFF THE NEWSTAND PRICE)

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

PERFECT FOR YOUR FAVORITE AGGIE'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT!
WWW.AGGIEMAG.COM | 979.229.8046



Key Action Item: Hold Your Meeting Here

Hilton College Station and Conference Center offers contemporary accommodations and a host of premium amenities within easy walking distance of the city's major attractions and restaurants.

Get the lowest price when you book direct*
at Hilton College Station and Conference Center. [Hilton.com](#) or call 979-693-7500.



Aggieland

ILLUSTRATED

PO BOX 6841 • BRYAN, TX 77805-6841

979-229-8046

www.aggiemag.com



Follow **@aggiemag** on Twitter or fan
Aggieland Illustrated on Facebook
to be eligible to win tickets to Texas A&M
sporting events and other great prizes!

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

PRSRT STD
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 69
COLLEGE STATION, TX



PARAGON
FINANCIAL ADVISORS

FEE-ONLY WEALTH MANAGEMENT YOU CAN TRUST



WWW.PARAGON-ADV.COM | 979-693-3907

215 ROCK PRAIRIE ROAD COLLEGE STATION, TX 77845

FIND US ON: